

HOUSE BILL 2570  
By Herron

AN ACT to designate a certain segment of State Route 22 in Weakley and Carroll Counties as the "Ned McWherter Highway".

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the elected representatives of the State of Tennessee should create a lasting tribute to a Tennessean who has contributed so significantly to the progress of this great state; and

WHEREAS, Ned McWherter is one such remarkable public servant, a voice of integrity in state and national political circles; and

WHEREAS, a native son of Weakley County, Ned McWherter provided unprecedented leadership for Tennessee as its 46th governor; and

WHEREAS, Ned McWherter's distinguished career in state government began in 1968 when he won a seat in the Tennessee House of Representatives. His down-to-earth business sense and commitment to progress quickly earned him the respect of his legislative peers. After just two terms, he was elected Speaker of the House, a position he held longer than anyone in Tennessee history; and

WHEREAS, as Speaker, Ned McWherter was instrumental in re-establishing the General Assembly as an independent branch of Tennessee government; he prided himself on continuing Tennessee's tradition of careful fiscal management and worked closely with four governors during his legislative career to find creative solutions to issues facing Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in 1986, Ned McWherter's desire to keep Tennessee moving forward led him to seek the governorship, which he won by more than 100,000 votes; and

WHEREAS, the people approved of his service and he was re-elected in 1990 by nearly 200,000 votes; and

WHEREAS, throughout his stellar service as governor of this great state, Ned McWherter stressed strict financial management, elimination of bureaucratic red tape, and finding creative solutions to the problems facing Tennessee. He also brought innovative management styles to state government, allowing him to expand services to the public, make major new investments in education and economic development, and keep the state's budget balanced, while keeping taxes low; and

WHEREAS, during Governor McWherter's tenure in office, Tennessee enjoyed a period of record economic growth and development, emerging as a national leader in the creation of jobs; and

WHEREAS, during his administration, Tennessee's economy was rated the strongest in the South, and the fifth strongest in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Governor McWherter has been an unremitting force in efforts to open up communities for new jobs; he also began the first state-funded program in Tennessee to help depressed communities build the facilities they need to attract industry and jobs; and

WHEREAS, under his inspired leadership, Tennessee had the lowest unemployment rate since we began keeping records, with the number of counties with double digit unemployment falling from 42 to only one; and

WHEREAS, because of Governor McWherter's emphasis on education reform to create a highly trained Tennessee work force for the year 2000 and beyond, Tennessee has become known throughout the world as a premier location for new industry and business; and

WHEREAS, he continued Tennessee's leadership in education reform by emphasizing competitive pay for classroom teachers, reductions in the state's dropout rate, and creation of

the innovative Literacy 2000 Program to give all Tennesseans the chance to learn reading and writing skills; and

WHEREAS, during the last four years of his administration, Tennessee's primary and secondary schools experienced the nation's greatest growth in state funding, an increase of 49%; and

WHEREAS, Governor McWherter increased state financial commitments to higher education through his education reform bill, while expanding opportunities for excellence in scientific research, technology, health sciences and the arts; and

WHEREAS, as governor, Ned McWherter carried out the largest road building program in Tennessee history, constructing one thousand miles of roads; and

WHEREAS, in the field of corrections, Ned McWherter's high tech management system cut operating costs in new prisons by almost half and Tennessee achieved the only fully accredited prison system in the nation as we took control of the prisons back from criminals and courts; and

WHEREAS, during the McWherter administration, Tennessee was recognized by respected national publications as the best managed state in the nation; and

WHEREAS, he provided universal health care coverage for Tennesseans by means of his innovative and bold creation of the TennCare program; and

WHEREAS, because of his strength and compassion, some 400,000 members of working families now can afford health insurance, while taxpayers have saved money and avoided otherwise certain tax increases in the old Medicaid program; and

WHEREAS, Governor McWherter accomplished all these things while holding taxes down and in fact making Tennessee's the absolutely lowest state and local tax burden in the entire country; and

WHEREAS, Ned McWherter, having previously been recognized by Governing magazine as America's best governor, has set the standard by which all other governors and other leaders must measure themselves; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the segment of State Route 22 from the corporate limits of the City of Martin in Weakley County to the corporate limits of the City of McKenzie in Carroll County is hereby designated as the “Ned McWherter Highway” in recognition of his meritorious and peerless career in public service and his unswerving commitment to the continued growth and prosperity of Tennessee.

SECTION 2. The Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating such segment of State Route 22 in Weakley and Carroll Counties as the “Ned McWherter Highway”.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

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